

# THE MIDWEST ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

## 07\_09.12.2012

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COURTESY RINKA CHUNG

TWO DEVELOPERS LOOK TO BUILD  
ON MILWAUKEE'S LAKEFRONT

## SHORING UP

To those who have braved at least one winter in the upper Midwest the prospect of "year-round vibrancy" on Milwaukee's blustery lakefront might raise an eyebrow. But that's exactly what developer Rick Barrett hopes his

continued on page 4



The mixed-use hospital complex opens onto a soccer field.

COURTESY HDR

CHICAGO COMMUNITY HOSPITAL SPEARHEADS MIXED-USE CAMPUS MODEL

## SAINTLY AMBITIONS

A few years ago then-Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and some aldermen toured Saint Anthony Hospital in Lawndale. The hospital provided community programs and charity care for an area that sorely needed it, but the operation had fallen on hard times financially.

Not long afterward, Alderman Ricardo Muñoz called up Saint Anthony Ministries CEO Guy A. Medaglia with a question: If the 22<sup>nd</sup> Ward gave 11 acres of property to Saint Anthony Ministries, what would they do with it?

They could have just built a bigger hospital. Instead Saint Anthony and Muñoz worked up plans for a 1-million-square-foot campus designed to provide 2,100 construction jobs and, Medaglia believes, a unique

model for community development.

Focal Point, as the project at 31<sup>st</sup> Street and South Kedzie Avenue is called, includes big-box and local retail, a charter school, childcare, green space, and hospitality suites for large functions like weddings and graduations. "At this point," Medaglia said, "the hospital is just a tenant."

The timing was perfect, Muñoz said. Formerly home to Washburne Trade School, the vacant lot at the east end of Little Village was already a target for the ward's efforts to expand public green space. "It was kind of like a marriage made in heaven of healthy uses for that site," Muñoz said. Plans call for four acres of green space, including a soccer field and an open

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WHERE IS ARCHITECTURE  
IN CHICAGO'S LONG-AWAITED  
CULTURAL PLAN?

## Grounds for Culture

In mid-July, after months of public meetings, the city of Chicago released a draft of the Chicago Cultural Plan. One of its biggest priorities: Space. According to plan project manager Julie Burros, a survey of public meeting participants listed space—along with arts education—as a top need.

"This is a plan—and it is very much about urban planning," Burros said. "We talk about space a lot, and I think we talk very specifically

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GRAVELY BEAUTIFUL.  
SEE PAGE 10



EDUARD HUEBER

A new development planned for the  
southeast portion of downtown.



COURTESY BUCKINGHAM COMPANIES

NEW DEVELOPMENT TO ACTIVATE UNUSED DOWNTOWN PARCEL

## INDY GOING URBAN

Downtown development can happen at a painstakingly slow crawl or, worse, through aimless expansion and piecemeal projects. But sometimes it moves ahead

in sudden bounds.

In Indianapolis, developer Buckingham Companies has embarked on a project that would essentially create

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URBS IN HORTO

The Sears Tower ceded its title of tallest building in the world to Kuala Lumpur's Petronas Towers in 1998. That same year Mayor Richard M. Daley authorized the Lakefront Millennium Project, converting a downtown train yard into a massive expansion of Chicago's front lawn. It was heralded as a model for a new generation of urban parks.

Having long since relinquished the title of skyscraper capital of the world to Asia, the U.S., and Chicago in particular, have embraced a new measure of urban vibrancy: ambitious parks and public works projects that are redefining our cities from the ground up.

There is sound logic for our cash-strapped cities to double-down on their investments in public space. Its return on investment manifests as tourism dollars and boosted property values, but also as long-term infrastructure. Parks and greenways sustain cities, from promoting public health and sense of place to regulating the local climate and enabling commercial hubs.

Work is slated to start soon on the world's longest elevated park, the Bloomingdale Trail, which would connect park-poor neighborhoods along the city's Northwest Side with a multiuse trail nearly three miles in length. Mayor Rahm Emanuel promised full support for the project, naming the trail a first-term priority. Northerly Island's idyllic transformation from former airfield to ecological oasis is on track to begin soon, as well, and the Chicago Park District last year acquired nearly 600 acres of marshland on the city's southeast side.

Projected to cost between \$50 and \$70 million, the Bloomingdale Trail will pair private money with federal transportation funds. Chicagoans are right to be cautious of underestimating the true tab of such an ambitious project. Millennium Park ended up costing \$475 million, more than twice its projected bill, with \$173.5 million coming from private sources. It also wrapped up several years overdue, something Bloomingdale Trail enthusiasts may recall during that project's long slog to secure funding. But viewed over the lifetime of the projects, even bloated price tags can be easily justified.

And the added benefits of ambitious parks projects go beyond economic impact studies. The Neighborhood Capital Budget Group, a now-defunct independent monitor of city spending, analyzed 13 years of planned investment between 1990 and 2002 and found parks were "left out" of the city's tax increment finance-driven development strategy. This shift in urban planning priorities may help correct the historic discrepancies between downtown and the neighborhoods, as high-profile projects encourage a more comprehensive vision that could bring far-flung communities into the fold.

Emanuel's \$1.7 billion infrastructure trust, though it still poses issues of transparency, proves there is no lack of political will to think big and pursue innovative funding schemes. Mayor Daley's infamous \$1.15 billion leasing of the city's parking meters left many Chicagoans with a healthy skepticism of flashy municipal cash grabs. But it would be a tragedy to let this lemon sour the image of public private partnerships in general.

We should continue to scrutinize the cost of innovative public space, because we want these projects to succeed. We should also look to Copenhagen—where they are already planning climate adapted communities—and elsewhere to guide our climate adaptation efforts, a crucial initiative that this new green paradigm is well-suited to address.

And there are smaller projects that could have an enormous impact in aggregate. Emanuel's push for bike lanes will help connect existing parks and green space, just as the Bloomingdale trail will connect park-poor communities with public assets elsewhere. But it is not the only abandoned rail line in town. The city should aggressively pursue a comprehensive network of parks, greenways and safe corridors for alternative transportation throughout the city's neighborhoods. Chicago's pleasant but still car-heavy boulevards system would be a good place to start. **CHRIS BENTLEY**



COURTESY MORRIS ARCHITECTS PLANNERS

**GROUNDS FOR CULTURE** continued from front page about place-making."

The plan outlines its priorities in 36 recommendations, the second of which addresses a "system to accommodate space needs for artists and creative professionals." Initiatives include the use of more tax increment financing funds and making foreclosed properties available for cultural purposes.

But some arts professionals, including William Massolia, artistic director at the Griffin Theatre, are leery. In 2005, Massolia started dealings with the city to take over the shuttered Foster Avenue police station and use it as a much-needed theater building. In January 2011 the deal finally went through.

In those six years Massolia faced red tape from the city. "Our experience was very arduous," he said. Designed by theater and performance architect John Morris, known for his new Steppenwolf Theater, the station's conversion to the Griffin Arts Center will begin in September. "The city didn't have knowledge of how not-for-profits work. Our main focus and mission is not a building, it's creating a work of art."

"The plan is great," Massolia added, "but the city needs to have a structure in place to make it work in a more expeditious manner." Noting the recent slew off layoffs within the city's cultural arm, he asked, "Who's going to do that work?"

Marshall Brown, assistant professor of architecture at Illinois Institute of Technology, who also runs New Projects, an urban design exhibition space in Bronzeville, agrees: "Using space in creative ways to do cultural work is fantastic. But if suddenly you have to go through a lot of paperwork, special zoning designation, a lot of regulation—then it's not so great."

Brown also points out that while space is a predominant focus of the plan, the word "architecture" appears only twice, including in a 1939 Frank Lloyd Wright quote integrated into the plan's colorful graphic design. And, he says, nowhere does the plan mention fostering architects or promoting architectural heritage within the city's culture and tourism industry.

Burros, whose background is in planning and architecture, hopes that architects don't feel slighted. "We were trying to be discipline neutral," she said. "When the plan talks about making Chicago a global destination, raising the global profile of Chicago, it's a way of saying we hope people think of architecture and Chicago architects."

Burros specifically points to "Recommendation 27," which proposes a large-scale festival showing off Chicago's renowned cultural amenities. "It could relate to a lot of assets," she said, "but we were thinking of architecture in particular."

**MADELINE NUSSER**

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INDEX STILL IN NEGATIVE TERRITORY BUT BOUNCING BACK

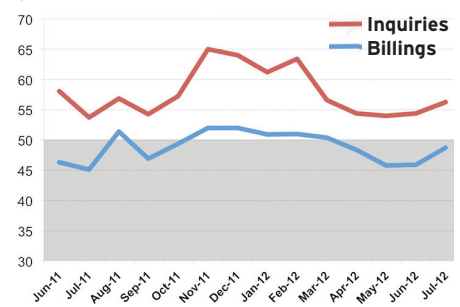
BILLINGS BEGINNING REBOUND?

The AIA's monthly Architecture Billings Index (ABI) for July came in with a disappointing 48.7 (any score below 50 indicates a decline in billings for

design activity). The news was not all bad though. The ABI was up significantly from last month's score of 45.9. "Even though architecture firm billings nationally were down again in July, the downturn moderated substantially," said AIA economist Kermit Baker in a statement. "As long as overall economic conditions continue to show improvement, modest declines should shift over to growth in design activity over the coming months."

At the regional level, the South, a region battered by the Great Recession, was the only area in positive territory, skyrocketing up to a score of 52.7 from the previous month's 47.6. The Midwest clocked in at 46.7, the West lagged with 45.3, and the Northeast continued its steady decline to 44.3, the lowest score for

that region since February 2010. By sector, multi-family residential (51.4) outpaced mixed-practice (49.1), commercial/industrial (48.4), and institutional (46.6). Inquiries rebounded to 56.3, up from last month's 54.4. **ALAN G. BRAKE**





## BILBAO OF THE MIDWEST?

If you read this column, you know Eaves loves a party. You also know we self-deprecatingly speak of mediocre Midwestern cities (we're from Louisville). Even with summer winding down, there's no need to stick out that lower lip. A slew of—well, ok, three-high profile openings will tickle even the slightest art and architecture enthusiast as Cleveland, East Lansing, and Cincinnati compete for the title of Bilbao of the Midwest. First up, the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, designed by **Farshid Moussavi Architecture**, opens on October 6. Will the Mistake-on-the-Lake become the Rust Belt Riviera? On MOCA's heels comes the Eli and Edythe Broad Museum on November 9. OK, we don't know anything about East Lansing other than a school's there, but—hey!—now they have a **Zaha Hadid**.

And finally, Cincinnati, home to America's first Hadid, will welcome 21c Museum Hotel by **Deborah Berke & Partners**. Their website says it will open late 2012. Which project will be an urban game-changer? We could be swayed by opening night invites, but right now my money's on Cincy.

## KEEP IN TOUCH, BK!

We've poked fun at **Blair Kamin** numerous times, from his nerdy-sexy picture next to his byline to our disparate views on PoMo design. Despite all that, his contribution as an architectural critic and historian is quite profound and very important for the Midwest. Kamin's announcement that he's taking a leave of absence from the *Chicago Tribune* for a fellowship at Harvard made us panicky. Newspapers are trimming staff faster than design firms during the recession. We just hope that with or without Kamin, the *Tribune* recognizes the value of his work and keeps that legacy alive.

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## MERCHANDISE MART COMPOSTS, AIMS FOR LEED INNOVATION CREDIT



STEVEN VANCE

## WASTE NOT

Always eager to back up its claim to the nickname "the city that works," Chicago has stepped up efforts to renovate its historic building stock. In addition to the public plan to retrofit 6.5 million square feet of office space, individuals are taking steps to reduce waste as well. Those efforts include pursuit of an innovation credit for composting in one of the largest LEED-EB certified buildings in the world.

Merchandise Mart was awarded Silver LEED certification in 2007. That put it among the ranks of other high-profile greening projects like the Empire State Building and Willis Tower. With more than 4 million square feet of floor space, the mammoth art deco landmark was the largest commercial building in the world upon its completion in 1930. It even carried its own zip code until 2008.

Now to push its environmental evolution further, the Mart has embarked on a composting initiative to bolster its LEED profile during the scheduled recertification process.

"They want to be a showcase for what's possible," said Kevin Dick of the Delta Institute, currently consulting with the building's owner, Merchandise Mart Properties (MMPI), on their efforts. "They're doing everything to make it a relevant building again."

The building's management had previously set up composting for the annual NeoCon trade show and has been recycling building materials for several years. They have also been recycling paper, glass, and plastic waste for far longer. But when asked what they thought about the recycling program, many tenants and employees were unaware it existed. "Once they heard about it," said Mark Bettin, MMPI's vice president of engineering, "most asked for even more bins."

That process was similar for composting. As with any program in a building as large as the Mart, composting was rolled out slowly. At first their trial system was troublesome—vendors needed to buy their own bags and remove the

waste too often. MMPI signed on another waste service provider, Collective Resource, and streamlined that process. After four years of troubleshooting and cautious expansion, fourteen vendors, mostly restaurants, now contribute food waste and other refuse for a total of up to two tons of compost each week.

Most vendors' stalls are very small, so bins wind up in back-of-house. Each tenant wheels their barrel to a loading bay twice weekly for pickup. Operations managers are even devising a system of incentives to encourage composting and recycling among the building's office tenants and showroom spaces. Large tenants will weigh their recycling and waste on a new scale installed in the building's loading dock. Those with the highest percentage of recycled and composted waste by weight, the thinking goes, could be rewarded for their efforts.

In ginning up support for the city's failed 2016 Olympic bid, Mayor Richard M. Daley billed Chicago as "America's Green City." He was criticized for overstating the claim, but from the vantage point of city hall's lush green roof one could understand Daley's optimism. Now, as a large-scale model, the Mart's efforts suggest significant progress. Google's Motorola Mobility has joined the procession of new tenants at the Mart, following its reinvention as a hub for Chicago's tech startups. Ongoing efforts by large landowners like MMPI could help drive the green market, its owners hope, by demonstrating even large and historic buildings can act nimbly to reduce waste. **CB**

## &gt; BENETTON

520 North Michigan Ave.  
Chicago  
Tel: 312-494-9156  
Design: Piero Lissoni  
Architect of Record:  
Antunovich Associates



COURTESY BENETTON

Italian retailer Benetton chose Chicago as the site of its first stateside flagship by architect Piero Lissoni. The new concept was executed by Antunovich Associates, who have had a hot run with other retail outlets, like Suit Supply and Armani. Benetton is better known for its provocative, eye-catching advertisements than sleek, luxurious design. This new incarnation could upend that.

Lightbox grates in powder-coated white hover over the entrance and windows. Inside the store, a minimal aesthetic—polished steel, various shades of gray, fixtures with clean lines, cubic shelving—provides an attractive backdrop to the colorful clothing and accessories. In a fun nod to their knitwear, the cash-wrap desk has been yarn-bombed, sheathed in a knitted cozy of sorts, while a splash of color can be found in the Donald Judd-like floating box shelves displaying eyewear.

The best part of the store is absolutely the most muted: the matte gray resin floor. Imported from Italy, the seamless surface lends surprising warmth and provides a welcome alternative to terrazzo or wall-to-wall carpet. Just down the street at 900 North Michigan Avenue, Gucci's well-worn gray carpet looks more shabby than chic. Maybe that luxury brand could take a tip from the new Benetton. **RYAN LAFOLLETTE**

artek

"A chair is not just a seat, it is the key to the whole interior."

**Kiki Collection**  
Ilmari Tapiovaara, 1960



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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER SEPTEMBER 12, 2012



**SHORING UP** continued from front page mixed-use tower near the Cream City's Lake Michigan waterfront will make possible.

The Couture will be a 44-story, \$125 million hotel and residential tower at the eastern-most plot of downtown Milwaukee's East Michigan Street. Barrett won a bid to redevelop the downtown transit center, whose proximity to the Milwaukee Art Museum and lakefront festival grounds have led some to call it one of the most valuable properties in Wisconsin.

Once viewed as potential competition for the Couture, plans for another nearby development have instead coalesced with that project into a cause for optimism along an underused corridor

of Milwaukee's lakefront area. At 18 stories the comparatively squat 833 East complements the Couture in massing, as well as in the economic impact projected by its developers. If the \$100 million 833 East hits its 2015 opening target it will be the first new office tower downtown since 2004.

Fourth-floor skywalk connections could link the Couture to 833 East and to the existing U.S. Bank Galleria, including the restaurants therein. U.S. Bank is the largest office high-rise in the state. It will connect one million square feet of office space to 833 East and, in turn, to the pedestrian environment that its developer, Mark Irgens, hopes the project will help foster.

"I think the Couture is

beautiful in its vision and could be devilishly difficult in its implementation," said CBRE Executive Vice President Bill Bonifas, who is handling leasing for 833 East. The projects won't be realized for a few years, and both need to secure more pre-leasing.

Together the two projects constitute a bet that growth along Milwaukee's downtown corridor will continue its progression eastward, but demand for new office buildings elsewhere has slowed somewhat. "The trend line," Bonifas said, "in terms of recent development, was bound to grab the lakefront."

Nearby 875 East Wisconsin and redevelopment in Northwestern Mutual's downtown campus are among the recent downtown projects that make the lake-



**Left: The planned redevelopment along the Milwaukee waterfront; Right: The 833 East office building.**

to design statement buildings that are both aesthetically elegant and modern, while being simple and functional," Barrett said. Both Milwaukee natives, principal Matt Rinka and Barrett share a sense of ownership over the future of their hometown's lakefront.

Though initially thought to run afoul of Wisconsin's public trust doctrine governing the use of former lakebed property, the Couture has won support from city and county officials—in part due to Barrett's upfront promise to meet local and minority hiring goals for jobs onsite. But final approval from the County Board and the Common Council is still pending.

Both projects would represent a substantial evolution for the Milwaukee skyline and, if its developers' projections hold true, help sustain a lakefront culture already nourished by Henry W. Maier Festival Park, Discovery World, and the city's iconic art museum. Barrett said the project is part of his mission to "put Milwaukee on the map as a vibrant, global city." **CB**



**SAINTLY AMBITIONS** continued from front page courtyard, in addition to an economic boost specifically designed to stay in the community.

Revenue from the campus' various leases will help support the non-profit's community education and wellness programs that would otherwise rely mainly upon mercurial government funding. "This self-sustaining model was very appealing to people that fund these kinds of initiatives," Medaglia said. "They saw their money lasting longer."

Designing the ambitious complex also called for a new model from its architecture firm, HDR. The team worked collaboratively with community members to identify the

neighborhood's needs. The campus will serve more than 400,000 residents from the nearby neighborhoods of Little Village, Pilsen, North Lawndale, Brighton Park, Back of the Yards, and Archer Heights. Three firms presented plans to Saint Anthony, which put them to the community for a vote. They chose HDR's plan.

"It's meaningful for us on a personal level," said Abigail Clary, HDR's director of health-care for the central region. "With health-care architecture you're always helping someone, but we're connected to the people we're actually going to help. That's very unusual."

The firm led an extensive study in partner-



ship with the University of Nebraska that "attempts to bring evidence-based design to the community scale," according to the report. Even though the study has been completed, the work isn't done, according to principal investigator Sheila Elijah-Barnwell. "We'll be back after it's occupied, measuring the outcomes," she said. "It doesn't just end with opening a beautiful building."

Collaboration is not without its hang-ups. Managing the variety of programs onsite was challenging, Elijah-Barnwell said, as the team tried to avoid chaotic circulation. And ambition breeds new problems. "When I told the architects we need all movable walls in the hospital," Medaglia said, "they looked at me like I had 16 heads."

The solution to that problem is still on the way, Clary said, but the team already fielded a design curveball that arose during community outreach. Among the key requests from Focal Point's future neighbors was a soccer field. HDR happily obliged, but worked to avoid a stiff divide between the field and the project's other programs. "One of the goals was to pull



all the outdoor space into the center of that campus for a community feeling," Clary said, "instead of a field on one side and buildings on the other."

The field is connected to a 22,000-square-foot courtyard in the center of campus by green space underneath one of the two-story skyways that link the three main buildings. Trussing girds those connecting retail structures with a pattern that recalls downtown's Hancock Tower as well as bridges elsewhere along the industrial corridor in which the site sits. An abundance of glass on the larger structures alludes to transparency—a theme which could be key if Medaglia's vision is to hold true. He wants Focal Point to be a nationwide model for community hospitals from Los Angeles to the Bronx.

"This is a big project. But the more people began supporting the concept, the more viable it became," said Medaglia, who left his career in financial consulting to chair Saint Anthony. "Gradually we've made believers out of the people who said it couldn't work." **CB**





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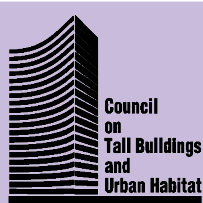
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**Al Bahar Towers; Abu Dhabi, UAE**  
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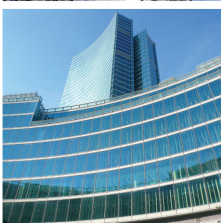
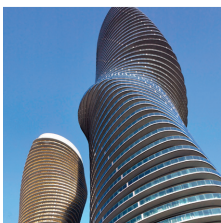
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# CTBUH

## \*AWARDS 2012



The development should activate street life in Indianapolis.



**INDY GOING URBAN** continued from front page a new neighborhood from 14 acres of vacant land near Lucas Oil Stadium, host to the Super Bowl earlier this year. CityWay includes 250 luxury apartments, 60,000 square feet of retail and office space, a luxury hotel, a YMCA, and public green space.

The four blocks north of South Street between Delaware Street and Virginia Avenue were once a train yard and a drainage swale before they were a parking lot. "For the last 130 years, it has been the most under-utilized parcel of land in Indianapolis," said Scott Travis, Buckingham senior development executive.

The city and state helped support the \$155 million project. Leveraging its AAA credit rating, Indianapolis aggressively supported the development through the sale of municipal bonds. The project services the debt, while Indianapolis acts as a credit backstop. On top of that, the city contributed \$9 million for infrastructure improvements, while Indiana kicked in \$5 million.

One of the first mixed-use projects in Indianapolis to consider mixing more than just two uses, CityWay is designed to connect the city's core to its somewhat overlooked Southeast Quadrant. The site is within walking distance of major employers like Eli Lilly, Rolls-Royce, and WellPoint, as well as the emerging cultural districts of Fountain Square and Fletcher Place.

Public transit is still lacking in Indianapolis, which may limit the resurgence of downtown urbanism. Still downtown occupancy rates

were around 95 percent last year, with developers on track to improve that figure this year in the wake of the building boom that preceded the Super Bowl.

Maury Plambeck, director of metropolitan development for the city, said an Eli Lilly executive and early tenant of recently built downtown condo space noticed the lot on his walk to work each morning. "He saw all the other pedestrian-oriented development going on in other parts of downtown," Plambeck said, "and he approached Buckingham."

The proximity to major employers should be a draw for potential employees seeking an urban lifestyle. Traditionally people from Indianapolis don't consider the area part of downtown. But this project will change that, Plambeck said, by tying into urban institutions like the cultural trail, a bike and pedestrian path that connects neighborhoods. "This connects four of our most important corporations in the urban core to the balance of the city," Travis said. Early signs suggest the formula is selling: All 100 apartments available for the project's first phase have been leased.

But the area was not a natural choice for pedestrian-oriented development.

Delaware Avenue, which borders the site to the west, was a one-way, five-lane thoroughfare that Travis called "almost not navigable" for pedestrians. In addition to taming Delaware, infrastructure improvements for the project include expanding better street lighting and adding parking along South Street. Two intersections will be raised to slow down motorists.

Gensler designed the hotel, which is set to open early next year, while OZ Architecture's Colorado studio tackled the residential component. Subtle touches in the material components, from balcony detailing to exposed brick, reference the industrial heritage of the nearby warehouse district. A public green in front of the hotel will host public events for up to 400 people.

In forging a new path for its downtown redevelopment Indianapolis has not forgotten their past. The team reclaimed hunks of limestone found buried at the site, repurposing the former foundation for landscaping accents. "It's got some history, some authenticity," said Brad Chambers, president of Buckingham. "We're thrilled to be working on a project at this site and at this point in the city's history."

CB



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cue. Time for  
my coffee  
break."*



*"Plenty of  
sun out to  
generate  
power."*



*Energy Status:  
Solar power  
generation  
activated.*



*Greywater  
Storage: 63%  
capacity.*



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ready to water  
the roof-top  
garden."*



*Update: Floor  
unoccupied.  
Reduce  
lighting.*



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out. We're  
heading to  
the park."*



*"Checking in  
remotely on  
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## DESIGNERS: GENSLER



Given that many of us may spend more than a quarter of our lives at work, our offices had better feel somewhat like a home. It's fitting then that Gensler design director Jason Hall, who led the firm's design of an office expansion for branding agency SapientNitro in Chicago's Inland Steel Building, called the process a kind of homecoming. Gensler's own offices were in the same 1950s Skidmore, Owings & Merrill-

designed building for more than 10 years until 2008.

"There were things we wanted to celebrate," Hall said. The terrazzo flooring on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor, for example, was adapted from the iconic building's lobby. "Having worked there, it was really just a respect and love for the building."

SapientNitro had their own vision for the space, of course, which the Gensler team incorpo-

rated into its salute to the original design details of Inland Steel. Self-described "idea engineers," SapientNitro listed "a sense of style that is uniquely Chicago" among its wishful descriptors for the new space. They also wanted to promote cultural and personal growth while maximizing flexibility.

The 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> floors comprise "an amazing column-free space," Hall said. It was a prime condition for imagination. Gensler identified

themes of overlap and balance in the client's schematic design document, which—in keeping with the company's character—is crisply designed and replete with whimsical Venn diagrams.

SapientNitro's previous space took up just half of the 11<sup>th</sup> floor, with open spaces along the edges. "It felt a bit like a tale of two offices," said John Carstens, SapientNitro's executive creative director. Gensler pushed all the

Clockwise from top, left: The column-free lounge and café; the elevator corridor is decorated with graphic murals of the EI; exterior of the Inland Steel building; hallways also feature Chicago images; reception and conference areas reference mid-century design.

collaborative program elements to the center for an orientation Carstens said promotes just the right amount of "forced cross-pollination" across departments. The absence of columns allows for natural light throughout.

"The way you access space is always through the collective," Hall said. "You have to go through the 'we' space to get to the 'me' space."

There's a slight separation of function between the office's two floors. The sleek 12<sup>th</sup> floor houses the main reception area for clients, while Carstens describes the 11<sup>th</sup> as "the creative monkey house." The 11<sup>th</sup> floor café is screened off from the work area and decorated with a distinctive SapientNitro twist: tables made from local bowling alley flooring; a chalkboard mural of the Chicago skyline rising out of flames; a wall grid of small boxes for each individual employee to display tokens of his or her personality.

That so-called "pixel wall" has housed several contributions from Carstens, including a rhinoceros stuffed animal and a toy John Deere combine. The wall was a way to make the space feel like home while SapientNitro slightly tightened its standards for employee decoration in individual office spaces. "Our last space did kind of feel like Grandma's basement," said Carstens, whose goal was to contain, but not discourage, personal expression. "This space belongs to us. We do want people to feel like they own it," he said.

"It's a wonderful thing when we see people take ownership of the space," Hall said. **CB**



## RESOURCES:

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## 1 NEST DE LA ESPADA

Made of high-density fiberboard (HDF), the unique slatted hood of this lounge highlights Autoban, an Istanbul-based design firm's modern take on traditional Turkish weaving. Built by De La Espada, Nest can be used alone or in a group to make a statement without overstating. [delaespada.com](http://delaespada.com)

## 2 URCHIN POUF & FLAX OTTOMAN THOMAS EYCK

Sourcing raw and local materials is a major part of Christien Meindertsma's practice—as well as the subject of her recent TED Talk. For these two casual seating options she went out of her way to use flax grown locally in the Netherlands. [thomaseyck.com](http://thomaseyck.com)

## 3 NESTREST DEDON

Sit it on the ground or hang it from a tree branch, Daniel Pouzet and Frad Frety's Nestrest makes for an elegant perch. Woven with supersized strands of an especially strong fiber that's four centimeters wide, Nestrest can support a full brood. [dedon.de](http://dedon.de)

## 4 DINING TABLE 00219 USONA

Shown here in tinted black oak, this open weave table base also comes in natural and birch. Like all of Usona's products, it's made to order and can be customized in a variety of sizes, finishes, and materials. [usonahome.com](http://usonahome.com)

## 5 CORACLE MATTER

Inspired by the small, woven half-shell coracle boats used in Wales since the Bronze Age, Benjamin Hubert updated the traditional vessel with a lounge chair made with a basket seat made from automotive suede and a steel frame wrapped in a suede tri-weave recalling bicycle handlebars. [mattermatters.com](http://mattermatters.com)

## 6 SPOOL RODA

Rodolfo Dordoni's Spool collection is, as the name suggests, inspired by weaving spools. The varnished stainless steel frame stands up to all weather conditions and the backrest is wrapped with double-polyester twisted thread to provide flexibility and durability. [rodaonline.com](http://rodaonline.com)



THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER SEPTEMBER 12, 2012

MINNEAPOLIS MAUSOLEUM IS A SACRED UNION OF OLD AND NEW

## HONORING THY NEIGHBOR



When a bucolic cemetery in Minneapolis began to near capacity its owners worried a large expansion might dampen the landscape's pastoral charm. The 141-year-old non-sectarian Lakewood Cemetery occupies 250 acres in the city's Uptown neighborhood.

At 24,500 square feet, the cemetery's new Garden Mausoleum is large compared to the existing structures nearby. Yet the building is in harmony with the older mausoleum and the chapel that it sits in between, as if in meditation. Elegant and quietly powerful, the mausoleum is an authentic union of materials and design in service of higher ideals, both human and divine.

Designed by Joan Soranno and John Cook of HGA, the Garden Mausoleum peeks out of a south-facing hill along the northern edge of the site's 1960s-era "sunken garden." Clerestory windows punctuate the mausoleum's granite face, revealing a warm interior stately enough for ceremonial rites but antithetical to negative associations that might be evoked by the word crypt. Inside, mahogany and charcoal granite walls complement white marble and onyx floors that alternate between honey yellow, jade green, and coral pink.

The mausoleum is a burial place for 10,000 people, but it is also home to a chapel and gathering spaces. As such its handsomely understated spaces are prime for spiritual exploration and self-reflection. Adjacent to Lakewood's 1910 Memorial Chapel, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the mausoleum is a continuous mosaic of textures—rift-sawn oak and bronze doors recall the old chapel's majesty, but gently, as one would a loved one's memory. **CB**



PAUL CROSBY

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## LOUISVILLE PUTTING POLITICS BEFORE PLACE-MAKING

# PRESERVING POWER

Louisville, Kentucky is home to seven historic landmark districts, including the nation's largest Victorian neighborhood, but recent changes to the city's 40-year-old historic preservation laws by the Metro Council have preservationists seeing an uncertain future. Citing concerns over oversight, accountability, public participation, and property rights, the council passed new rules giving the legislative body final say over all landmarks decisions and added restrictions to the petitioning process that initiates the landmarks review process. Now some fear that politics and potential corruption could erode the intent of the law and preservation groups are mulling legal action to reverse the changes.

The contentious six-month fight was spurred by the four-year-old landmark designation of Colonial Gardens, a former beer garden built in 1902 alongside one of the city's Olmsted parks. The designation stopped a proposed strip mall planned for the site, but the building remains vacant and deteriorating, splitting the neighborhood over its historic merits. "If Colonial Gardens didn't happen, this ordinance wouldn't have happened," said Stephen Porter, an attorney representing preservation groups.

Preservationists maintain that giving a political body the final say over the landmarks process unduly politicizes the process and could lead to illicit campaign contributions from developers. It also removes the lucrative negotiating power the ordinance previously possessed, where compromises could be worked out about saving historic buildings without officially invoking the landmarks process. Fundamentally, Porter is disturbed that the authority of the Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission, an appointed panel of volunteer experts, can be overturned by a political body untrained in historic preservation practices. He noted the ordinance included some compromises, including extending a 30-day stay of demolition of historic properties to allow more time for the Landmarks Commission to prepare reports and hold public meetings.

The final bill was passed on July 26 and subsequently vetoed by Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer. In a letter explaining his decision, the mayor said, "Landmarking is a standards-based process and is rarely used—averaging twice a year for the last 40 years. Our landmarking process has served us well for more than a generation—and preserved our sense of place for generations to come." Despite the mayor's veto and outcry from concerned preservationists at two public hearings, the council voted 18 to seven to override the veto on August 9.

Porter said preservation groups are considering the best time to bring a challenge. "There's no reason for a big rush," Porter said. "It's possible that Metro Council will never even review a case, but if some case were to arise where they did overturn the Landmarks Commission's decision, we'd likely challenge the ordinance with a lawsuit."

**BRANDEN KLAYKO**



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Sculpture: Gyre, Thomas H. Sayre, N.C. Museum of Art



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☐ 100-249  
☐ 250-499





The polluting Fisk power plant has long helped to define Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood.

SETH ANDERSON/FICKR

# NEW GENERATION

Chicago shuts two coal plants this month, but reuse speculation is at peak capacity, reports **Chris Bentley**.

In late August a barge floated up the Chicago canal and unloaded 1,500 tons of coal from Romeoville, Illinois. It's a trip barges like it have made up to three times daily for decades, delivering coal to burn in one of two power plants on Chicago's southwest side. But this one was the last.

The Fisk and Crawford coal plants will close in September. Their owner, Midwest Generation, agreed to decommission the facilities ahead of schedule under mounting pressure from environmental groups and to take advantage of \$151 million in tax breaks. Falling natural gas prices and pending Environmental

Protection Agency regulations also played a decisive role in the closures.

Now the communities of Pilsen and Little Village, home to Fisk and Crawford respectively, eye the 60- and 72-acre sites with mixed feelings. A 2002 Harvard School of Public Health study linked the plants to 41 premature deaths and 2,800 asthma attacks annually. As soon as neighborhood environmental organizations celebrated the facilities' early closure they encountered a new challenge: How to build a future for the industrial sites that have helped define their communities for roughly a century.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel convened

a task force in March to investigate potential reuse options for the site, but the privately owned land is ultimately Midwest Generation's to sell. Plans for reuse have to grapple with historic preservation, environmental cleanup, and unemployment in a rapidly gentrifying area.

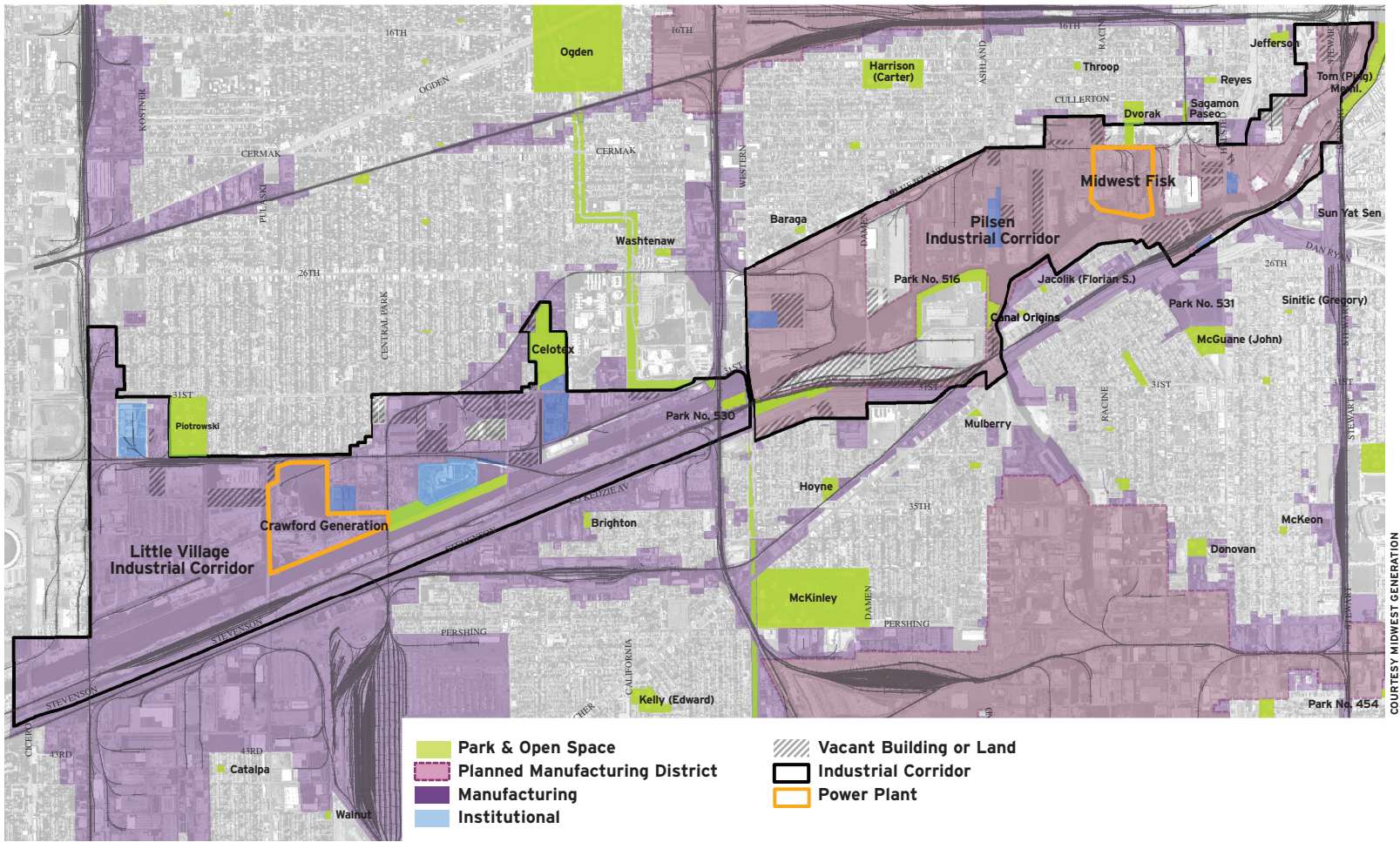
As coal plants around the country power down, what happens to these 132 acres in Chicago could have nationwide implications. After several months under consideration by the city and an ambitious team of community groups, the exhaust stacks of Fisk and Crawford still cast long shadows over the city's southwest side.

## GREEN GROWTH

"It's changing the way the city does development in a community like ours," said Kim Wasserman, coordinator for the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO). "Conversations that have historically never happened are now happening."

Instead of the city's usual dropping in to build a new school only to vanish after the press conference, Wasserman said, officials have taken time to appreciate the complexity of the neighborhoods and the struggles they face. And previously adversarial parties have buried the hatchet in the name of productive discussions.





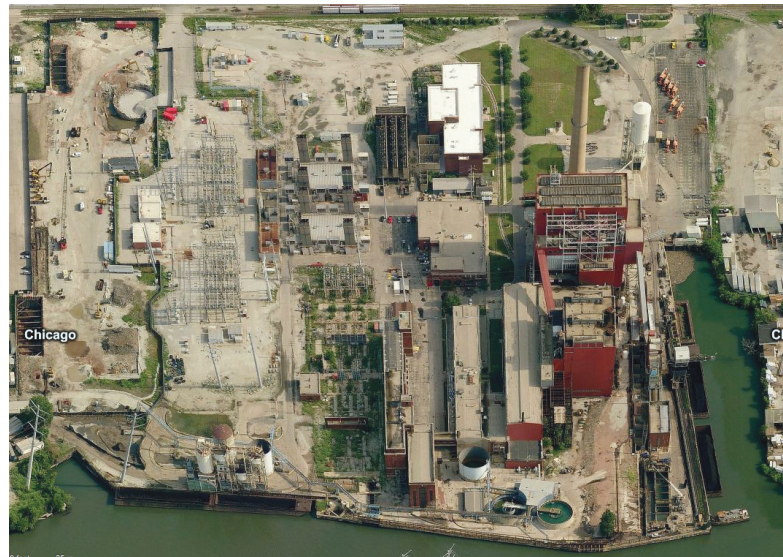
**Above:** A map showing the industrial corridor in the Pilsen and Little Village neighborhoods; **Below, left and right:** The Fisk plant covers 60 acres on the Chicago Canal. **Opposite page:** The 1903 Turbine Hall at Fisk; **Opposite page, below, left and right:** The Crawford site covers 72 acres in Little Village.

Activists scaled the stack at Fisk last year and unfurled a banner reading “QUIT COAL,” in what was perhaps the most visible incarnation of the area’s growing anxiety towards their industrial neighbors. LVEJO encouraged community members not to grow vegetables in soil because they suspected contamination, even offering “toxic tours” of the neighborhood’s environmental

hazards—Crawford was a fixture on the tour route. Now Toxic Tour leaders and representatives from Midwest Generation sit across from one another in negotiations both have called collaborative and respectful. “This is the first brownfield coal site that has engaged in this kind of process with the community,” said Jean Pogge, CEO of the Delta Institute, the Chicago-based non-profit leading

the mayor’s task force. In Pilsen, public forums on the topic predate the task force’s formation by at least several months. “A lot of people want to see more green space,” said Nelson Soza, executive director of Pilsen Alliance. “But they also want to see jobs. We don’t think that’s mutually exclusive.” Soza’s organization conducted door-to-door interviews with hundreds

of neighborhood residents earlier this year to find out their ideas for reuse. His results lined up with those from another survey conducted by PERRO, the Pilsen Environmental Rights and Reform Organization. PERRO’s survey respondents favored multi-use over single-use by a margin greater than six to one. Green space topped the list of preferred land uses with 37 percent





of responses, while “jobs/industrial” received the next most votes at 27 percent.

Calls for housing were unanimously discounted early on, task force members said, due in part to zoning issues and the industrial environment of the sites. Neighborhood groups also worried housing proposals would exacerbate gentrification. Pilsen and Little Village are predominantly Latino communities and both have seen thousands of residents leave in recent years. Pilsen alone lost about one quarter of its Latino population between 2000 and 2010. The intervening years saw unemployment rise among a diluted Latino population, as the area’s thriving art scene attracted young white tenants.

Both neighborhoods are in a park-poor industrial corridor. While the future owners will ultimately determine the extent of green space onsite, the Delta Institute identified two water-edge locations at Crawford and one at Fisk that they deemed potentially suitable for public access to the canal. And early talks have targeted an underused parking lot off Cermak Road for a potential land transfer to the park district. But PERRO organizer Jerry Mead-Lucero said he hopes for even more public space.

### POWER EXCHANGE

Nearly all parties agreed the sites must provide jobs, from survey respondents to Mayor Emanuel. And community groups are adamant that those jobs come from a non-polluting employer. The plant closings represent 200 lost positions, which environmental groups hope can be replaced by light manufacturing and green jobs.

While no dangerous material will be stored onsite after the plants are closed, remediation is always an issue with former industrial sites. A legacy of contaminants typically follows

decades of coal-fired electrical generation. The condition of the sites has not yet been determined, but will ultimately factor heavily into the cost of converting the land for public use.

The Fisk site’s history will persist long after the power shuts off. The original 1903 generation station once housed the world’s largest steam turbine. Designed for Samuel Insull,

slate. Almost half of the site will remain tied up in easements from Commonwealth Edison, containing electrical grid infrastructure and peak-load generators, complicating matters further.

### COMMUNITY UTILITIES

More than 100 coal plants have closed nationwide in the last three

mixed-use developments from Texas to Germany. In Austin, a 9-year remediation effort by the city and its public utility company reclaimed the Seaholm Power Plant for retail, office, condo, and hotel space, as well as a 3-acre park. Though it burned natural gas and fuel oil instead of coal, Seaholm bears some similarities to Fisk. Its historic art deco architecture and remaining electrical operations were successfully integrated into the new development.

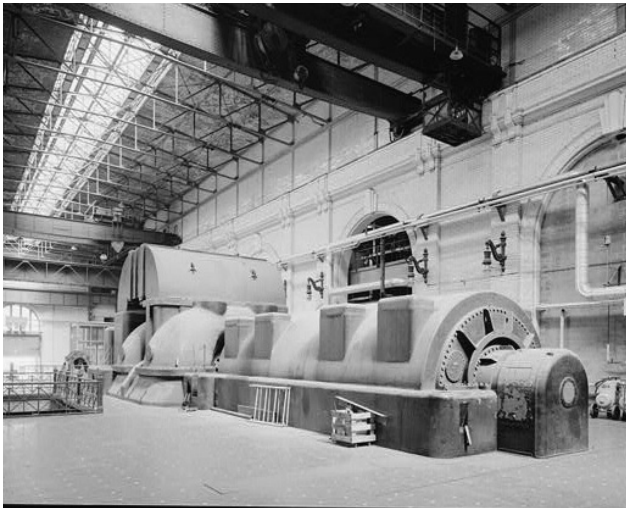
The site handled remediation well, too. It earned the first-ever EPA Reuse certification for unrestricted use of a PCB remediation site, as well as a Gold Medal in the environmental category of the 2005 Texas Council of Engineering Companies Engineering Excellence Awards.

“Whoever takes over these sites will have to work through public processes,” said Doug McFarlan, a Midwest Generation representative. “So I think it’s just good business for everyone to be transparent and open book.”

Work is far from over for the task force. As Midwest Generation courts potential buyers for the sites, the guidelines crafted by community groups will face a crucible. But consensus is strong between parties once known for their adversarial positions. Those involved hope the task force will be a model for community engagement, as well as a positive influence on the community in this time of transition. Southwest side residents like Soza see an unprecedented opportunity to remake their neighborhood’s industrial core in the image of the community that has grown for generations around it.

“We hope we can build something as historic as the Fisk plant when it first came in 1903,” he said.

**CHRIS BENTLEY IS AN’S MIDWEST EDITOR.**



COURTESY SKYSCRAPER PAGE

an aide to Thomas Edison, Fisk was a driving force in Chicago’s ground-breaking electrification. Edison’s signature still graces a guestbook inside the plant, but Insull’s heritage is waning. His State Line Generating Plant in Hammond, Indiana shut down earlier this year; along with Fisk and Crawford, it rounded out his local fleet of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century power plants.

Recommendations from PERRO include a permanent museum onsite and preservation efforts for the historic 1903 Fisk Generation Station. If preservationists win landmark designation, however, that could potentially bog down negotiations with buyers looking for a clean

years, roughly one-sixth the total number of plants in the United States. An abundance of natural gas, tightening environmental regulations and campaigns from an increasingly unified clean energy movement have challenged the nation’s dominant source of electricity.

Industrial reinvention has emerged as a guiding principal for Midwestern development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The region’s stock of aging coal plants is large. Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin together are home to more than one-fourth of all coal plants in the country.

Coal plant sites have been given new life as parks, museums, and



COURTESY MIDWEST GENERATION



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**THURSDAY 13**  
**LECTURE**  
**Massimiliano Fuksas:**  
**Et in arcadia ego**  
5:30 p.m.  
Cleveland Museum of Art  
11150 East Blvd.  
Cleveland, OH  
clevelandart.org

**FRIDAY 14**  
**WITH THE KIDS**  
**Sculpture Garden Favorites**  
3:30 p.m.  
Toledo Museum of Art  
2445 Monroe St.  
Toledo, OH  
toledomuseum.org

**SATURDAY 15**  
**EVENT**  
**Art with Character**  
10:00 a.m.  
Milwaukee Art Museum  
700 North Art Museum Dr.  
Milwaukee, WI  
mam.org

**TUESDAY 18**  
**LECTURE**  
**Grete Marks:**  
**When Modern**  
**Was Degenerate**  
1:30 p.m.  
Milwaukee Art Museum  
700 North Art Museum Dr.  
Milwaukee, WI  
mam.org

**WEDNESDAY 19**  
**LECTURE**  
**Vincent James and**  
**Jennifer Yoos:**  
**Current Work**  
6:00 p.m.  
Illinois Institute of Technology  
College of Architecture  
3201 South State St.  
iit.edu/arch

**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**Vernissage**  
4:00 p.m.  
Museum of  
Contemporary Art  
220 East Chicago Ave.  
mcachicago.org

**THURSDAY 20**  
**LECTURE**  
**Black Art in America:**  
**A Conversation for**  
**the 21st Century**  
7:00 p.m.  
DuSable Museum  
740 East 56th Pl.  
dusablemuseum.org

**THURSDAY 20**  
**LECTURE**  
**Sally Mann:**  
**If Memory Serves**  
5:10 p.m.  
The University of Michigan  
Museum of Art  
525 South State St.  
Ann Arbor, MI  
umma.umich.edu

**FRIDAY 21**  
**LECTURE**  
**Edgar Brandt and**  
**Art Deco Ironwork**  
7:00 p.m.  
Cleveland Museum of Art  
11150 East Blvd.  
Cleveland, OH  
clevelandart.org

**FRIDAY 21**  
**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**Building—Inside**  
**Studio Gang Architects**  
6:00 p.m.  
Art Institute of Chicago  
111 South Michigan Ave.  
artic.edu

OCTOBER

**WEDNESDAY 3**  
**LECTURE**  
**In the Know**  
7:00 p.m.  
Chicago History Museum  
1601 North Clark St.  
chicagohistory.org

**FRIDAY 5**  
**EXHIBITION OPENING**  
**The Singing Bird Room**  
**of Robert Lostutter**  
7:00 p.m.  
Madison Museum of  
Contemporary Art  
227 State St.  
Madison, WI  
mmoca.org

**SUNDAY 7**  
**EXHIBITION OPENINGS**  
**Made in Hollywood:**  
**Photographs from**  
**the John Kobal**  
**Foundation and Manet:**  
**Portraying Life**  
12:00 p.m.  
Toledo Museum of Art  
2445 Monroe St.  
Toledo, OH  
toledomuseum.org

**WEDNESDAY 10**  
**LECTURE**  
**TAA Lecture: The Eco-Print**  
7:00 p.m.  
Cleveland Museum of Art  
11150 East Blvd.  
Cleveland, OH  
clevelandart.org

**THURSDAY 11**  
**SYMPOSIUM**  
**Collaboration:**  
**Facades + Innovation**  
8:00 a.m.  
Illinois Institute of Technology  
3201 South State St.  
facade.archpaper.com

**SATURDAY 13**  
**EVENT**  
**Member Day Trip:**  
**How the 'L' Shaped Chicago**  
9:15 a.m.  
Museum of  
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57th St. and Lake Shore Dr.  
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**COLLECTION AT THE ART INSTITUTE:**  
**FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT AND THE PRAIRIE SCHOOL**  
The Art Institute of Chicago  
111 South Michigan Avenue  
Through November 4, 2012

Frank Lloyd Wright visited Japan for the first time in 1905, inspired by the country's pavilion at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. He lived in the country while working on Tokyo's Imperial Hotel, soaking in Japanese art and culture. It had a lasting impact on his own work, especially the development of the Prairie Style as well as his renderings and presentation drawings. During his time in Japan, Wright became a pioneering collector of Japanese prints, and often supported himself as an art dealer. Clarence Buckingham purchased numerous prints from Wright in 1911 (including Utagawa Hiroshige's *Sparrows and Camellia in Snow* from 1831, above), which became the foundation of the Art Institute's print collection. This exhibition is composed of prints purchased by Wright, photos of an exhibition of his collection he staged in 1908 at the Art Institute, and drawings from Wright's studio.

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## Where the Art Is

**Camp Out: Finding Home in an Unstable World**  
Laumeier Sculpture Park  
12580 Rott Road, St. Louis  
Through September 16



COURTESY LAUMEIER SCULPTURE PARK

*Camp Out: Finding Home in an Unstable World* is a steely-eyed examination of the sometimes noxious state of home ownership and the outbreak of contemporary

placeless-ness. It's also an exuberantly scribbled wish list of architectural next-steps, urban do-overs and domestic re-inventions.

The exhibition, which is on

view at Laumeier Sculpture Park in St. Louis, features work by 10 international artists who look broadly at what "home" represents in a world that has watched the abrupt collapse

of property ownership and enduring construction cycles.

Roughly half the work included is located, either appropriately or ironically, inside the stately house

*Highrise Tours* by Oliver Bishop-Young

that once belonged to the Laumeier family. Each of the half-dozen small galleries feature pieces that explore what it means to identify with a specific place or to be sheltered by something that is ultimately ephemeral.

Photos by Edgar Martins, whose work often captures neglected buildings and ghostly construction sites, sets an ominous mood at the outset of the show. Exhibited here are images of a seemingly empty, possibly abandoned, house in mid-disintegration. Ragged holes in a drywall ceiling hover over mounds of pink insulation that have spilled onto the beige carpet of an otherwise unblemished and wholly unremarkable corridor. It seems as though an internal organ violently ruptured only moments prior to the shot and fluffy pink flakes are still floating languidly through the hazy air.

Smartly installed across the room, Emily Speed's *Inhabitant* serves as a whimsical counterpoint. Resembling a ramshackle model of San Gimignano, and created while Speed temporarily lived in St. Louis, the freestanding piece is more than six feet tall and looks as if it were assembled during a frenzied fever dream. Formed from cardboard, duct tape, and **continued on page 19**



Alexander Girard #27

COURTESY AMMO BOOKS

## FABRIC OF LIFE

Alexander Girard  
Todd Oldham and Kiera Coffee  
Ammo Books, \$200

Despite what the mainstream media would have you believe, *Mad Men* is not responsible for today's fervid embrace of mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century design. It's more emblematic of a pattern in public taste since World War II: underappreciated trends rediscovered four to six decades hence. Consider the love for Victoriana in the 1950s, art nouveau in the 1960s, arts and crafts in the 1970s, and deco and moderne in the 1980s. Can a new rage for Memphis and PoMo be far behind?

As such, we shouldn't be surprised that Alexander Girard is having sort of a moment. Late in 2011, Ammo Books released a 672-page tome about him, compiled by the fashion/interior/product designer Todd Oldham with design writer Kiera Coffee. At NeoCon this year, concurrent with reintroducing an archival collection of his textile designs, Herman Miller mounted *An Uncommon Vision*, an excellent exhibition of his work that will remain at Merchandise Mart until spring.

As director of Herman Miller's Textile Division from 1952 to 1973,

Girard worked with George Nelson and the Eameses to create what became the company's well-defined aesthetic. But Oldham and Coffee's *Alexander Girard* is less a scholarly analysis of Girard's career than a visual compendium of all things Sandro (his American parents raised him primarily in Italy), including designs for interiors, exhibits, textiles, tabletop items, furniture, and graphics, as well as his extensive personal collections of art and objects.

The book doesn't offer an enormous amount of interpretative material, which is acceptable, because it does offer such a dense array of color-splashed images illustrating the vast range of Girard's talents that it compels readers to draw their own conclusions about his influence on design, both then and now.

Dozens of pages full of his folk art holdings—figurines, textile pieces, tableware, and other objects—clearly demonstrate a commonality with the quirky toys and games that were such an important part of Ray and Charles Eames' oeuvre. And while **continued on page 19**





COURTESY LAUMEIER SCULPTURE PARK

**Left: Treetent by Dré Wapenaar**

already populated with work by Sol LeWitt, Donald Judd, Jenny Holzer, Beverly Pepper, Alexander Liberman, and Vito Acconci, among many others.

*High Rise* by Oliver Bishop-Young stands out as a piece both referential and acutely contextual. Swelling upward from a large, visibly used industrial dumpster as if it had been baked like bread, discarded dressers, bookshelves, tables, and bundles of wood are arranged methodically, fastidiously, and could pass as a one-off collaboration between Louise Nevelson and Joseph Cornell. Bishop-Young has long been interested in finding new uses for the lowly but versatile industrial dumpster and has previously reappropriated them as small gardens, swimming pools, parks, and living rooms.

Sited steps away is quite a different approach to redefining something that is an exceedingly common element of our daily lives. Dré Wapenaar deftly employs a broad tree trunk as living scaffold from which he hangs *Treetent*, his canvas, wood, and steel shelter. This inhabitable structure is formally reminiscent of oozing tree sap or a bird's bulbous nest and is accessible only by climbing

the ladder that precariously leans into the small opening 12 feet above ground. Inside, appointed with a wood floor and a table, it is spacious enough to comfortably stretch out and enjoy the uninterrupted views of the surrounding art and grounds.

Susan Sontag was likely not on the minds of the artists featured in the *Camp Out* exhibition, but she had some memorable thoughts regarding a different kind of camp that are surprisingly relevant to the work currently installed at the Laumeier house and grounds. In *Notes on "Camp,"* Sontag wrote: "The whole point of Camp is to dethrone the serious. Camp is playful, anti-serious. More precisely, Camp involves a new, more complex relationship to 'the serious.' One can be serious about the frivolous, frivolous about the serious."

The exhibition draws no conclusions, never points accusatory fingers, and stops short of providing large-scale architectural solutions to the complex issues that riddle our cities and neighborhoods. In short, the show is frivolous, thank goodness, which is the most useful and reassuring aspect of this exuberant and highly engaging collection of work.

**BRIAN NEWMAN IS A ST. LOUIS-BASED WRITER AND ARCHITECT.**

**FABRIC OF LIFE** continued from page 18

his space-aged molded plastic furniture designs for Braniff and their eye-popping upholsteries may have been too edgy to make their way into your average American home, they certainly seem to have captured the fancy of Hollywood art directors in the 1960s. Consider the sets for such TV shows as *Love American Style*, *Laugh-In* and *Get Smart*, or just about any Doris Day rom-com.

There is no denying the beauty and richness of the book, or the significance of its effort to catalogue such an important designer's portfolio. Yet its very materiality raises all sorts of issues regarding the state of art publications and also the viability of print media generally. At a list price of \$200 and an oversized format (12 by 16 inches), it's a major investment in both dollars and shelf space. As a practical matter, it's the kind of thing you'd probably have to keep out as an art object rather than put it in a bookcase.

While the debate over the relevance of actual, physical books rages on, publications that are primarily visual in content persist in print form, as increasingly more precious and rarefied objects. A publication like *Alexander Girard* attests to its publisher's optimism that a market for an oversized volume with a \$200-plus price tag still exists. Whether or not that's true, the fact that the publication doesn't exist in an electronic reader alternative seems aggressively non-modern, or at the very least antithetical to spreading Girard's gospel to another generation.

**PHILIP BERGER IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR.**

**WHERE ART IS** continued from page 18 acrylic, its erratic agglomerated masses create towers, stairs, windows, and columns that jut upward in a crystalline gesture of tiny architectural elements. Further, with a possible wink toward William Van Alen—known for dressing up as his own Chrysler Building—this ecstatic urban form can be picked up and worn to the specific sites that inspired its forms.

Similarly, Mary Mattingly's *Wearable Home* is art that can be worn. Her work incorporates familiar fabric patterns and vernacular clothing typologies

from cultures around the world. By melding kimonos, saris, trench coats, military uniforms, and more, Mattingly has stitched together a suit that is simultaneously generic and singular. There is an eight minute video of the suit in action, bobbing up and down on the surface of a vast body of water, dutifully protecting its wearer from the elements. *Wearable Home* is additionally represented by three collages graphically reminiscent of Stanley Tigerman or Superstudio.

Six pieces are installed on the 105-acre grounds outside the house, sited in a landscape

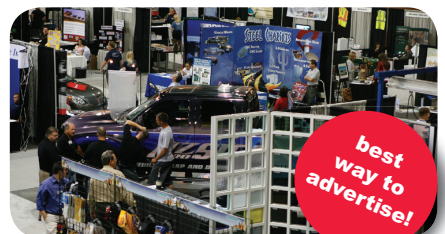
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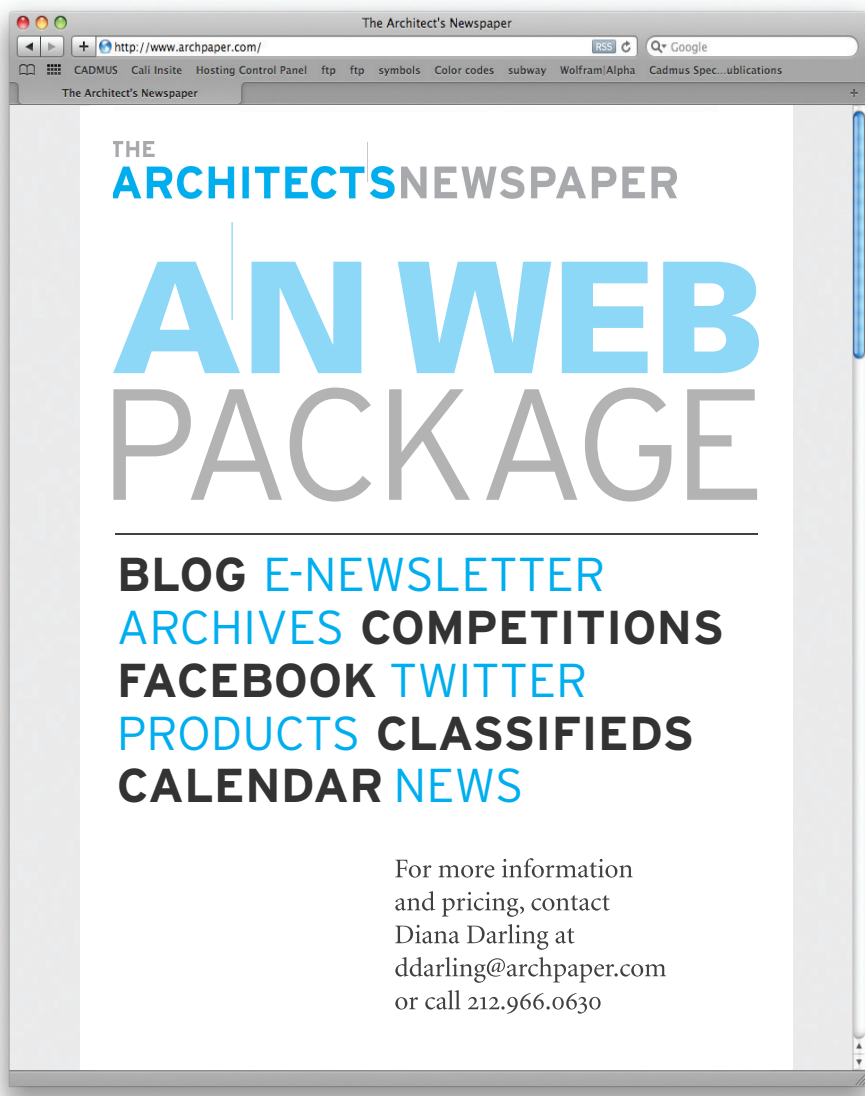
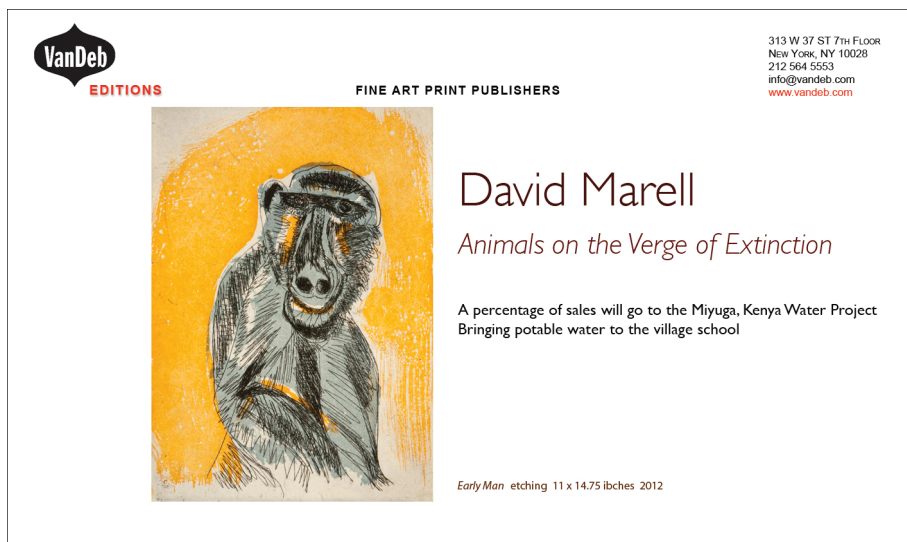
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While living and working at London's Architecture Foundation—actually sleeping inside his latest gallery installation *Three Little Worlds*, a modular stage comprised of three inhabitable and interactive graphic strips on display this past summer—Chicago designer Jimenez Lai talked with *AN* contributor Jonathan Louie about his interest in graphic novels, living in his latest creations, and client-less architectural projects. Lai is an assistant professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago and principal of the firm Bureau Spectacular. His manifesto, *Citizens of No Place*, was recently published by Princeton Architectural Press. Earlier this year Lai was named a winner of the Architectural League Prize for Young Architects.

**AN:** Earlier in your career you developed a following for your graphic representation of the architectural process; but your interest seems to have moved toward other architectural endeavors—such as your oversized “Superfurniture.” How does the architectural narrative still play itself out in your design and process?

**JL:** The similarity between cartoon making and architecture is that both practices imagine other worlds, and both disciplines demand astute graphic articulation to resonate with their audience. With cartoons, authors literally needed to indulge in their own fictional worlds in order to tell stories that are unlike existing

reality. In some ways this is a very liberating thought for architects—the stories we write should resist the acceptance of the normal, typical, generic or absolute, because we are the physical writers of the city fabric that represents the culture of our times.

My interest in Superfurniture is scale-related. Many of the predecessors who I admire built installations before they were able to gain enough steam to build buildings. This is a path I've been interested in, the relationship between drawing and building as a young person. Some of the architectural effects that installations produce are simply unscalable, and probably should not be scaled at all—human perception doesn't always work in every size. Worse yet, some installations forfeit architecture altogether and merely produce physicalized illustrator diagrams about some sort of global economy or community activism without any desire to nurture a sense of architectural effect. My relationship with the installation scale and human engagement had to be one-to-one in order for the part-to-whole relationship to develop. This is why I think installations should be projects not quite big enough to be buildings, but far too big to be furniture—it is what it looks like, not to be scaled.

**In *Three Little Worlds*, there seem to be two narratives unfolding. The first—through Kickstarter—communicating design intent to an audience, and the second the**

**narrative of living in your Superfurniture. Can you talk more about performance, and how it has influenced your work?**

The internet has helped me voice my intent in advance. I feel deeply fortunate to have been at my age during this era of the internet. So, yes—the first life of this project lived its course through a different representational avenue. I have been extensively documenting my time in this installation through videos. In some ways, the delivery of the performative aspect will also require the internet.

The past week living here has been a journey inward. While I feel extremely fortunate—I am now living in London by the Thames in an installation I designed and drawing murals all day—it displaced me from my comfort zone and I am gaining a perspective on what the next chapters of my life could be. Perhaps this isn't entirely a performance. I wanted to take myself out of context to learn more about domesticity.

**Do you consider installations to be architecture?**

It depends if the intention of the installation is meant to be a scaled model, or a one-to-one architectural effect. In almost all cases, the installations that I enjoy are studies of parts, with the *whole* being architecture. Which is to say, these installations do not attempt to be at any other scale but the scale we live in, and therefore I think of them as being *partially architecture*.

**More so than your previous**



**pieces, *Three Little Worlds* seems to encapsulate a total lifestyle. If Superfurnitures' organize themselves around the home,**

**how do you determine what are and are not necessary additions?** In retrospect, *Three Little Worlds* could have done more to facilitate total lifestyle. In terms of sensibility, the color, texture, and proportion of the frames really produces a distinct atmosphere from the normal world. So in that sense, the project does create a satisfying lifestyle. The frame-to-boundary relationship, on the other hand, was functionally miscalculated. Because I am currently immersed in a thought regarding graphic vs. painterly, and because I choose the graphic argument, *Three Little Worlds* deliberately withheld traces of how things were built. As a result, it even overlooked the white, poche spaces for other possible uses. In another version of a project like this, this will definitely be something I would pay closer attention to.

**What is the graphic in architecture?**

I am interested in two particular aspects of graphics—sensibility and convention. I believe both to be communicative techniques, but sensibility evokes effects, whereas convention articulates thoughts. Through articulation, I think about the exact meanings that line weights and line types can convey. We are able to communicate cut, directionality, orientation, projection, plane, above/below, surface condition, transparency, layers, and texture—all simply within the conventions of architectural notation that readers mutually agree upon. I think the same about drawings—careful control of lines can produce suggestive messages for the audience to read or misread.

With sensibility, on the other hand, the message may not be as exact. Perhaps the most simplistic dichotomy would be sharp versus soft, as the two sensibilities can evoke different reactions. Furthermore, within soft, there are many, many types of soft curves. I think of the specificity of curve-types to be similar to timbres in

**Above and left: Jimenez Lai and his installation *Three Little Worlds*.**

music, as it establishes the mood of a composition.

**As a young architect, you've built a career around being client-less or having a larger audience as your client. What are the benefits and detriments in the development of your work and design agenda?**

The benefit of having this career so far is that I have managed to build a portfolio with very little compromises, and was able to really meditate on the architectural effects and issues that I am interested in. This route has allowed me to nurture my thoughts.

The detriment is that I have almost zero money whatsoever. I spend every last cent of my university salary building this practice. The odd grant money or sales of art just does not cover the cost of the office.

**Can you give an example of your project process?**

As “client-less” as these projects have been, there still were a lot of constraints. With *Three Little Worlds*, the unattainability of funds vastly dialed back the ambition of the original thought. I began by proposing a comic book that a person can walk into, exploring the relationship between framing, windows, and voyeurism. We went through Kickstarter to fund the project, but it just still was not enough in the end. This process required us to take on the tasks of being designers, fundraisers, and publicists. And for *White Elephant* (a 2011 installation at Louisville, Kentucky's LoT exhibition space) we were even partially the fabricators in-house. This life of multi-tasking is extremely exhausting, and I am very much looking forward to having a client. But, perhaps this process has also molded me to be a more creative and versatile problem-solver. This may influence the way I design when actual constraints emerge.



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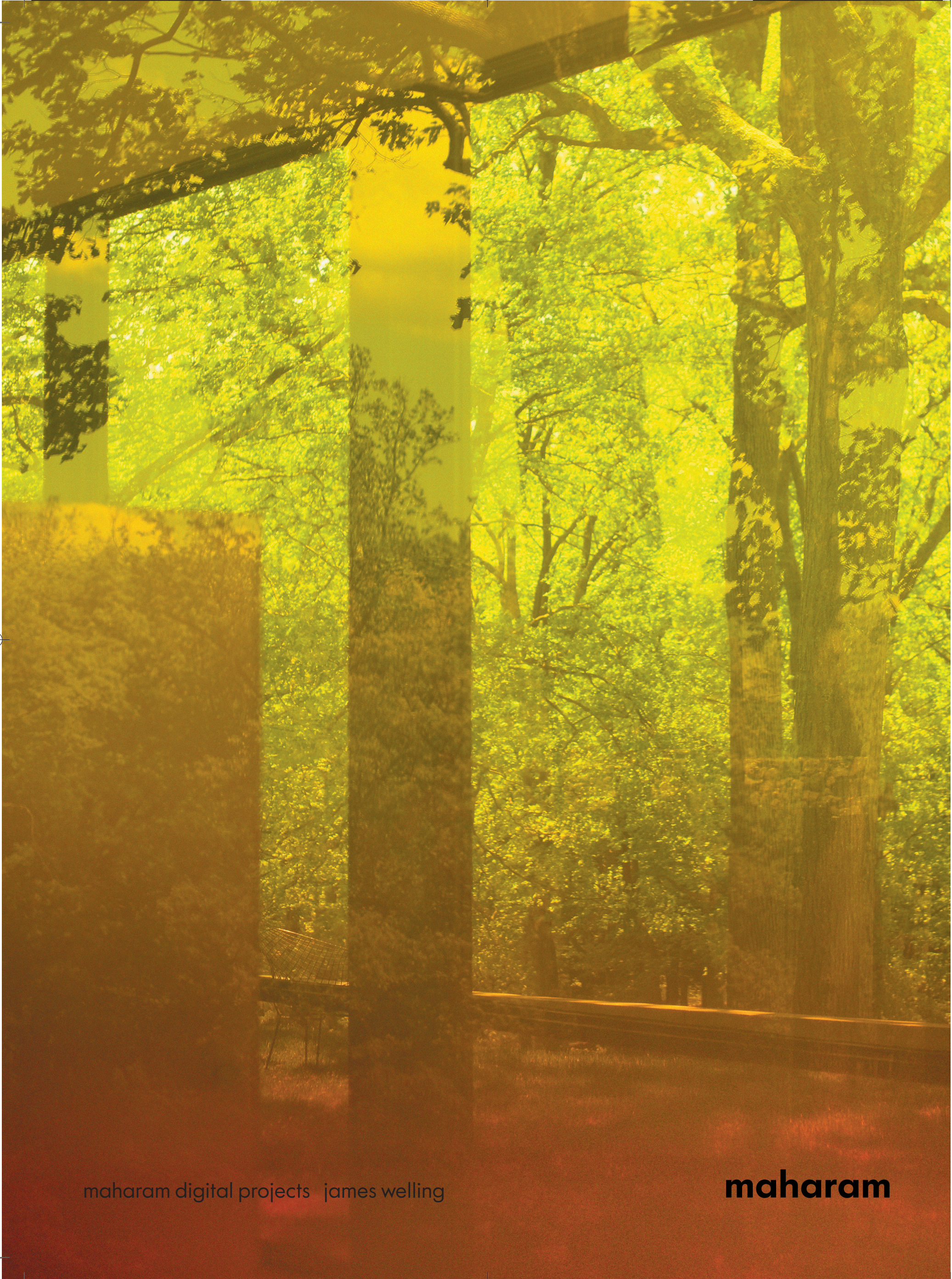
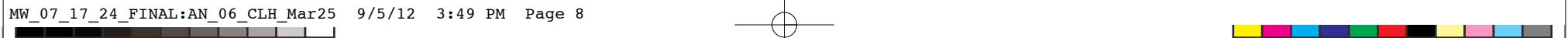
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